

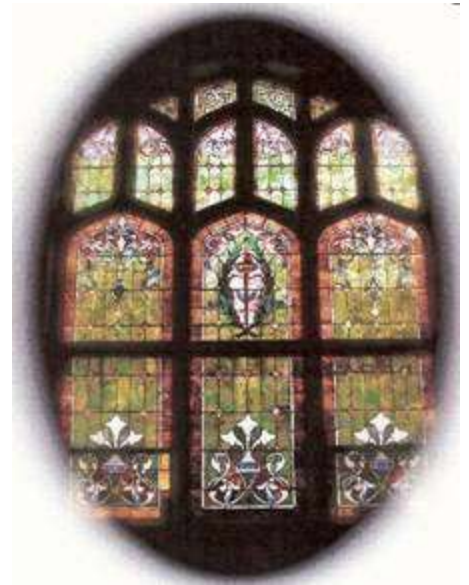
FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



Congregation established 1836.

Newsletter of the
**First
Unitarian
Church**
Alton, Illinois
110 East 3rd St. (location)
PO Box 494 62002 (mail)

Office phone: 618-462-2462
<https://www.firstuualton.org>



February 2022

There will be NO IN-PERSON SUNDAY SERVICES in the sanctuary until further notice. We will have “hybrid” services with only those directly involved in putting on the service (i.e., the speaker, worship associate, pianist, and the tech team) in the building. Services will stream at 10 a.m. on YouTube (or Click “Virtual Services”) on the church’s homepage <https://www.firstuualton.org>

**The Zoom Coffee Hour follows at 11 a.m. at
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88505584363?fbclid=IwAR0hRmxfn2ZSIo-U98VW0vq9-uXvx1khIPC7nTK7YqfGa_u6v6ilbcknr5g
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10 a.m. WORSHIP SERVICES FOR FEBRUARY

February 6

Speaker: Robyn Berkley

Title: “*Sacred Synchronicities*”

February 13

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall

Title: “*Are we there yet?*”

As winter turns toward spring, we are waiting to arrive on so many things. How can we find meaning in the waiting when it is absolutely not what we want?

February 20

Speaker: Tracey Howe-Koch

February 27

Speaker: Annie Girresch

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Greetings...thanks to everyone who showed up to the annual meeting. It was a long one, but there was a lot we had to discuss. I'm so glad we are moving forward with the ministerial search. We can definitely manage this financially AND we need this to help lead our church spiritually and be a leader in the community. We already have a handful of people who have volunteered to serve on the search committee, if you have an interest, please let [Mary Johnson](#) know.

As for our Stay or Go decision, we shared with you some of the research already done. I want to thank everyone who is helping with that process. Please put March 6th on your calendar...we would like to have a session on managing Difficult Conversations. This is ESSENTIAL if we want to navigate the decision process about what to do with our building. I encourage everyone who plans to participate in this process to please participate. We'll hopefully have live and virtual options available. We will continue to collect cost information to maintain our building and what it will cost, on average to move to a new location. There are many variables to consider, and we will keep you updated.

I just want to say how much I appreciate all of you and your support and willingness to make this community a priority. The challenges we face here are not unusual...many congregations are struggling through this pandemic, but we will get through this and together we'll move forward in this beloved community!

Love and light!

Robyn

Social Gatherings



Anna Ds
Thursday,
February 3, 2022
11:30 a.m.

(Depending on the snow fore-cast, the Anna Ds may meet on February 10th instead. Sandy will

keep us informed by email.)

The *Anna D. Sparks Women's Alliance* will meet at The Old Bakery Beer Company, 400 Landmarks Blvd. in Alton. We are asking that anyone attending our group luncheons be fully vaccinated or have had a negative COVID test no more than 3 days prior to the meeting. Masks of course are required to enter the restaurant and while moving around inside.

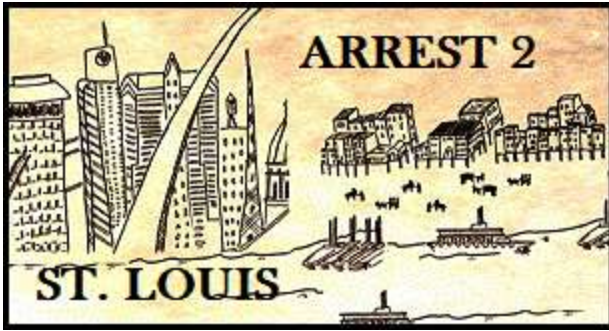
RSVP to [Sandy Shaner](#) by email or phone by Tuesday, February 1.

Men's Group
Lunch Gathering
Thursday,
February 10,
2022
11:30 a.m.



The men's group will be meeting for lunch at The Old Bakery Beer Company, 400 Landmarks Blvd. in Alton. We are asking that anyone attending our group luncheons be fully vaccinated or have had a negative COVID test no more than 3 days prior to the meeting. Masks of course are required to enter the restaurant and while moving around inside.

If you're not already on the group's email list, contact [Paul Hebert](#).



January 12, 2022

Cost estimates are being gathered for the various maintenance and repairs needed at the church – e.g., windows, basement leaks, asbestos removal, exterior painting of wood and metal surfaces, interior painting.

The motion was made and approved that we approach Anna Bilyeu, a grant writer, to see if she could collaborate with us in finding and applying for grants for facility improvement.

Both the annual UUA Congregational Certification form and the UUA Ministerial Search Form are nearly completed and will be sent to the UUA before February.

**Congregational Meeting Notes
January 23, 2022**

Twenty-three church members attended the Zoom Congregational meeting. Phillip Lund, Congregational Life Consultant for the MidAmerica Region of the UUA also attended.

Robyn gave an overview of the last six months. She mentioned:

- that discussions are ongoing with the City about the park and accessible parking;
- that Phillip Harris’ case has not yet gone to court;
- that there are 2 vacancies on the Board that need to be filled (Treasurer and President Elect).

Financial Information was presented by Buddy Stricker and Katherine Valley:

- Our endowment fund is down to \$219,527 due to the fluxes of the stock market
- There are 25 pledge units this year. To date we have received \$33,097 from pledges. We are on target to receive the budgeted amount of \$54,230 if everyone continues to make their pledged donations.
- Total income to date from all sources is \$54,851. Expenses have been kept low with a to date figure of \$29,774.
- The financial feasibility of hiring a half-time minister was reviewed, with the conclusion that it was doable with several options for funding.

(Congregational Meeting, continued)

**Session 2: Thursday, February 10, 2022
Early to Mid-Twentieth Century. 7:30 – 9:15 p.m.**

Sabrina Trupia is the co-coordinator of this program and invites you to participate.

<https://mailchi.mp/c04e52b8b66f/arrest-2-st-louis-area?e=612b778a17>

SIGN-UP for ARREST 2 HERE

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf9v6tLz1O7Z9eCyUbwi2KfS_RmFidGEOmKmIqQrTQu85U-Fg/viewform

ARREST 2 - St. Louis Region

Anti-Racist Religious Education and Solidarity Training (ARREST) St. Louis Edition.

This new series continues the mission of Toward Justice’s anti-racist education by focusing on the racial history of the St. Louis region. In the program, which will occur monthly and will be hosted by a variety of experts, we will learn about and discuss some of the historical and cultural events that have occurred in the region. We will also have an opportunity to connect to the history of First Unitarian Church of St. Louis through those times, as we believe that anti-racism can also be thought of as a spiritual practice. We will conclude the program with a field trip to visit some of the places we have discussed during the program.

Please view videos before the class sessions (approximately 2 hours a week). Videos serve as background information for the discussion sessions.

There is no class fee, but donations to help defray costs are welcome. To make a donation send a check to the church with ARREST 2 in the memo

or use the [online payment system](#). **Board**

Meeting Notes

Phillip Lund spoke about part-time ministry and encouraged the church to proceed with a ministerial search. He cited a book entitled “*Part-Time is Plenty: Thriving Without Full-Time Clergy.*”

The motion was made, and posted on Zoom, to submit the Ministerial Search Application to the UUA. There were 21 yes votes, 0 no votes, and 1 abstention. The motion passed, and the Application will be sent out by the end of the month.

Robyn reported on the Stay / Go Research, saying we are still a long way from making a decision. A few estimates of the cost of mandatory repairs were given with more estimates to be gathered.

Robyn will contact a professional grant writer, Anna Bilyeu, to find out the cost of her services in helping us find grant money for some of the needed repairs and upgrades.

We will have a workshop in March, led by Rev. Dr. Claudia Hall, on “Having Difficult Discussions” and we will be developing a Right Relations Covenant.

DENOMINATIONAL EVENTS

RA 2022 Registration Now Open!



Friends,

Registration is now open for virtual MidAmerica Regional Assembly (Saturday, April 30, 2022, 10AM – 2PM ET / 9AM – 1PM CT). There is a sliding fee scale between 25.00 to \$50.00 and scholarships are available. Please register on our [RA registration page!](#)

Our keynote speaker, UU educator, consultant, and facilitator **CB Beal**, will present “The Glass is Refillable: Pandemic Exhaustion, Lifelong Faith Formation, and Preemptive Radical Inclusion.” The day will feature worship, keynote presentation and conversation, lunch break, business meeting, and time for social connection. This year we will be using the **Whova** platform, which improves security, accessibility, and ease of use. Upon registration, all participants will receive information on how to access Whova and learn how to get the most out of it. We look forward to seeing you there!

General Assembly Registration

2022 Registration Information

Join us **June 22 - 26, 2022 online or in-person in Portland, Oregon.** General Assembly 2022 will be a multiplatform event, with registration options for in-person and/or virtual participation. In-person registration for GA 2022 in Portland, Oregon is open. Registration for Virtual participation will open March 1. Financial support for registration as well as a payment plan are available.

- [Adult In-person Registration Form](#)

Financial Donations to the Church

You can now make a financial donation to the church through PayPal. The blue logo icon is in the upper right-hand corner of the church's homepage <http://www.firstuualton.org/>.



You may also donate using Givelify. Click on the large green square on the church's homepage.



Or mail your check to the church at PO 494 Alton, IL 62002.



On January 28, 2022 the church's application to start the search for a minister to begin next August was submitted and accepted by the UUA.

Several people (John Herndon, Joy Hoeft, Greg Gaines, Mary Weber, Nathan Brown) have already said they will serve on the Search Committee, but hopefully someone from the Edwardsville area will also volunteer, so the committee will best represent the width of our church community.

This is an ad hoc committee (one created for a specific purpose) whose work is time limited (i.e., from now through August).

Search Committee meetings will be held on Zoom, but committee work will probably not begin until sometime in the spring.

If you are interested in being part of the search process, please contact [Mary Johnson](mailto:Mary.Johnson@firstuualton.org).

CHURCH CONTACTS 2022

Board Members

President: Robyn Berkley robynberkley@yahoo.com
Secretary: Mary Johnson mejohanson@mindspring.com
Treasurer: Open
President Elect: Open
Member at Large: Aiden Crist arexboi@gmail.com
Member at Large: Alex Hoeft alex.j.hoeft@gmail.com
Member at Large: Jennifer Lewis jenniferkaylewis@gmail.com
Member at Large: Carol McGrew carol_mcgrew@yahoo.com
Member at Large: Pat Moore patjimmoore@charter.net

Office Support: Nancee Magilson nmagilson@hotmail.com

Building and Grounds: Michael Tarabulski madtparty@uwalumni.com

Custodial: Hedda Kirk hthrkirk@gmail.com

AV Tech Team: Alex Hoeft & Ken Hoeft alex.j.hoeft@gmail.com; kfhoeft@gmail.com

Music: Joy Hoeft kjabhoeft@gmail.com

News of our Former Minister – The Rev. Khleber Van Zandt



Khleber served as our minister in Alton from 2005 – 2014. His time with us was one of increased membership and growth in many areas of church life. In 2014 he was called to be the minister of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Venice in Florida. He will retire from the Venice church on February 1st. He and his wife Linda plan to stay in the Venice area. The full article about Khleber was in the Venice *Gondolier* and was posted on UU Friends by Layne Simpson so you can read the complete article there.

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